

A VOYAGE ROUND THE WORLD.

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1774.
March.

have been glad to have ascertained this circumstance, but the natives always denied us admittance into these places.

A plantation of sugar-canes and one of bananas adjoined to the house we had visited, and both were in excellent order, considering the stony quality of the ground. The bananas were all growing in holes one foot deep, which we supposed to be contrived for collecting the rain, and preserving it for a longer time about the plant. The sugar-canes were about nine or ten feet high, even in this parched country, and contained a very sweet juice, which the inhabitants presented to us very frequently, and particularly whenever we asked for something to drink. We concluded from thence that they had no water on the island, but coming back to the landing-place we met captain Cook, whom the natives had conducted to a well very close to the sea, which was cut deep into the rock, but full of impurities. When our people had cleared it, they found the water in it rather brackish, but the natives drank of it with much seeming satisfaction.

Captain Cook had not been very fortunate in trading with the people. They seemed indeed to be so destitute as to have no provisions to spare. A few matted baskets full of sweet potatoes, some sugar-canes, bunches of bananas, and two or three small fowls ready dressed, were the whole purchase which he had made for a few iron tools, and some Tahitee cloth. He had presented the people with

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1774
MARCH

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beads, but they always threw them away with contempt, as far as ever they could. Whatever else they saw about us, they were desirous of possessing, though they had nothing to give in return. Their number was now decreased nearly to one half, many of them having probably gone home to their dinners; however, the number of women was always remarkably small in proportion to the men, there being not above twelve or fifteen at our first landing, and about six or seven when we embarked again. They were neither reserved nor chaste, and for the trifling consideration of a small piece of cloth, some of our sailors obtained the gratification of their desires. Their features were mild enough, and the large pointed cap gave them the air of professed wantons.

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262

We returned on board the ship before noon, and found it at anchor, though we had left it under sail. The fresh fruits and roots which we brought on board, were immediately distributed as far as they would go, and proved a most seasonable refreshment to our sick. We tasted the fowls, which seemed to have been dressed under-ground, by means of hot stones being wrapped up in green leaves, in the manner practised amongst all the nations of the South Sea, whom we had hitherto visited. The potatoes were of a gold-yellow colour, and as sweet as carrots, therefore not equally palatable to us all; however they were extremely nourishing, and very antiscorbutic. The juices of this,

[252]

[171]